

Assistant Executive Commissioner, to act on behalf of Hongkong at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition.

'AN ENGLISHMAN' in a letter which appeared in our issue of Saturday, takes exception to the remarks we made on the subject of the new big guns for the Lyceum Pass. He puts it that the satisfaction which we expressed over the statement that the sum to be expended for ordnance had been doubled, and the assertion that the light guns are to supplement the heavier pieces, ought to be modified. Our correspondent further states that the heavy guns have been squeezed out of the Home authorities, that the lighter pieces were not originally intended to supplement the heavier guns but to stand alone, and that the grant of the larger sum for Hongkong defences has been wrung from the Home Government by the force of public opinion. In a measure we agree with these assertions; but in this Crown Colony of Hongkong we are thankful for small mercies. There can be little doubt, however, that the Colonial Government, and indeed every authority worthy of notice here, are at one with the hon. member (Mr. T. Jackson) who has drawn public attention to the inadequacy of the defences of the Island. Having achieved some success in this direction, there is reason to hope that, as 'An Englishman' suggests, we may obtain even more marked concessions. Now that the big guns are to be placed, it may reasonably be asked who is to man them; and, in view of the experience gained by experiments at Home and by the French operations at Fochow, how are the men who work the guns to be protected. Ordnance batteries are now-a-days almost the only kind of defensive works at which men can work their guns in presence of shell-firing; and it would be interesting to know whether the batteries now being prepared for the heavy guns are gradually granted to the Colony will furnish that protection to the gunners which the exigency of the times demand. A shell from an ironclad is said to deal death within a radius of thirty yards of the spot where it drops, and it is generally believed, the battery at the Lyceum Pass does not provide against this possibility, the question where the gunners are to come from may be asked in conjunction with the other,—of where they are to go to during an attack. This is a matter which is or should be of vital importance, and we trust that some one will be able to bring pressure to bear upon the Home authorities to have it set at rest.

The settlement of some means for dealing with the finances of Egypt continues to be the subject of an immense amount of diplomatic negotiation in Europe. We are now informed that the Great Powers have accepted the British proposals as a basis for further negotiation on this matter. To obtain an idea of the existing position, this telegram must be read side by side with the previous one referring to the same subject. It stated: 'The British Government announces the acceptance of the counter proposals of the Continental Powers as a basis for further negotiations on the subject of Egyptian affairs; offers to guarantee a loan, but rejects the proposal of a multiple control.' It may be inferred, therefore, that the Great Powers are agreeable to the guaranteeing of a loan by England, which is not the least surprising, and will allow the British Government to remain supreme in Egypt, which is no doubt the important point for which England is contending. The fact is that England has been spending too much money in Egypt during the last year or two to warrant the weakening of her hold upon that country just at present. Apart from the millions spent in the campaign in lower Egypt, it has been estimated that the expedition to rescue General Gordon will cost from ten to fifteen millions sterling. Some return is required for that money, and it is not an opportune moment to ask England to vacate the control of affairs in Egypt, and to hand it over to the Great Powers—in other words, to a 'Multiple Control.' One of the original British proposals was that certain lands should be allotted to England by way of security for the loan she proposed to guarantee. It is probable that on this point England has made some concessions.

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The German steamer *Elisa* arrived this morning from Haiphong, which port she left on the 30th ult. The news from Tonquin is not startling. The march to Langson has not yet been commenced. General Bricard de L'Isle apparently having decided to await further reinforcements before advancing in force. Two of the transports which arrived with troops from Europe about a month ago, are still at anchor in the river at Haiphong. Two large sailing vessels have arrived there with coal from Australia and another from Singapore with timber.

An American contemporary reports that 'the Rev. Joseph Cook, the deeply philosophical of the unknown, made an attempt the other day to throw a sleeping-car porter on a Western railway. Brother Cook's general appearance after the controversy proved that the effort was the greatest failure of his life.'

The *Nagasaki Express* says:—The French steamer *Duchesse* took her departure on the 20th Jan., with a full supply of coal and provisions on board. A few days previous to her leaving it was reported that she was bound to Korea, but we think it far more probable that she has gone to Formosa.

We hear that Prince Mi, the person first attacked at the dinner in Seoul on the 4th December, is likely to recover from the serious wounds. It is reported that the 'ramp' of foreign drilled soldiers, who sided with the Japanese, has been dissolved, and that the men have been distributed amongst the other three camps.—*N. C. D. News.*

The *Nagasaki paper* regrets to hear that Mr. W. G. Aston, H. B. M.'s Consul-general in Korea, is suffering from very severe indisposition. Mr. and Mrs. Aston were passengers from Jen-chuan to Kobe by the *Uni Maru*, in company with Mr. Inouye, who is sincerely to be hoped that a short visit to that port will be beneficial to his health. During his absence, we believe that Mr. W. L. Carter is acting as his assistant.

The German schooner *Lovise*, Capt. Helm, which arrived at Nagasaki on the 11th January, reports having been stopped and searched by the French man-of-war *D'Estaing*, off the south end of Formosa, whilst on the passage up from Amoy to this port. The search, however, proved entirely unavailing, and the schooner, after a short stay, left for Amoy, where it is expected to arrive on the 16th, and the *Lovise* was expected to remain until she returned. Gen. Foute, U. S. Minister to Korea, arrived in the *Ossipee*, on leave of absence, we believe, a day or two ago, and is expected to remain in the P. & O. S.S. *Thetis*.—*Nagasaki Express.*

The U. S. S. *Ossipee* arrived at Nagasaki from Corea on the 22nd January and she returned to the same country two days later. At the date of her leaving Corea everything was very quiet and no further trouble of any kind was expected. Men-of-war in harbour were: British *Esper*; German *Hela*; Chinese *Hwa-yen*. H. M. S. *Thetis* left for Shanghai and Chifoo on the 16th, and the *Esper* was expected to remain until she returned. Gen. Foute, U. S. Minister to Corea, arrived in the *Ossipee*, on leave of absence, we believe, a day or two ago, and is expected to remain in the P. & O. S.S. *Thetis*.—*Nagasaki Express.*

The *N. C. Daily News* of Jan. 29th says:—While steaming through Shetpo Roads, the steamer *Mesio* observed five Chinese men-of-war. These must be the vessels which left Wosung last week to attempt to raise the blockade of Formosa. Four of the vessels were at anchor and the other was proceeding seawards, probably with the intention of ascertaining whether there were any French men-of-war about. It also kept on the watch probably fall into the clutches of the Frenchman who was waiting off Matsun on the 25th January. Shipwrecked sailors are about fifty miles below Chifoo, so the fleet had not got very far when seen by the *Mesio*. According to the *Shanghai* the fleet arrived off Fochow on the 27th January. The *Mesio* of the 28th says:—According to the *Shanghai* a telegram was received last night by the Chinese Government from the French Government, announcing the safe arrival of the Chinese warships *Nanshin*, *Nanshin*, *Yue Yuen*, *Chih Hai*, and *Ching King* at Fochow. It is rather strange that they managed to get there without being noticed by the French fleet which was at Matsun on the 25th inst.

The following despatch, dated 28th December, appears in the American papers:—Marquis Tien, has warned Earl Granville that the sale to France of seven vessels of the *Castille* and *Monarch* lines now trading between Hongkong and the Cape of Good Hope, for the purpose of transporting French troops to China, is a breach of neutrality. The English Government advised the owners of the vessels that no evasion of the foreign enlistment act will be permitted. The announced denial of the purchase by the French Government is not believed. M. Odier, the brother-in-law of M. Rouvier, the Minister of Commerce, had charge of the negotiations for the purchase of the vessels. The *Intransigant* charges that the transaction was a piece of official jobbery. It is reported that M. Ferry has recalled M. Patenotre, the French Minister to China, and that the French Consul at Tientsin has been ordered to Shanghai. The latter's departure from Tientsin severs all French official relations with China.

It will be matter of regret to the public of Yokohama generally to learn that General Van Buren, the U. S. Consul General, is obliged to proceed home on sick leave. He has previously to his recent trip to Hongkong written to the Department of State for leave of absence, in the event of his voyage south not having the desired effect. On his return to Yokohama, the severe cold he produced the old results, and the doctors had decided that with or without leave, a change of climate was absolutely necessary. Fortunately, the Department was more accommodating than usual, and sent out a telegram to the Japanese Government, requesting that General Van Buren should be allowed to avail himself of the fact of the P. M. S. S. City of Yokohama, by the southern route, to take passage by the steamer *Yokohama*, the severe cold he produced the old results, and the doctors had decided that with or without leave, a change of climate was absolutely necessary. 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